

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 /020 R

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DRAFTED BY: EB:NPAZDRAL:BAS

APPROVED BY: EB:NUEL PAXDRAL

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R 271802Z SEP 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 231029

FOR DEPUTY ASST SECRETARY J.L. KATZ

FOL REPEAT OF PANAMA 5935 TO SECSTATE SEP 26

QTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 5935

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, PN

SUBJECT: BANANAS: UNITED BRANDS/GOP NEGOTIATIONS

REF: (A) PANAMA 5698 (B) PANAMA 5536 (C) PANAMA 7397,

DEC. 31, 1974

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF EARLY THIS MORNING, UB VICE PRESIDENT MATHERS REPORTED NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOP RESUMED EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 24 WITH FOLLOW-UP MORNING SESSIONS SEPTEMBER 25 AND ANOTHER EXPECTED TODAY WITH POSSIBLE FOLLOW-UPS NEXT WEEK.

2. MATHERS REPORTED HIS COMPANY IN THE "THROES OF TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT IS GOING ON." GOP HAD DISCARDED UB'S PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP (REF B) AND IS BENT ON BUYING OUT UB PRETTY CLOSE TO THE TERMS REPORTED IN REF C. MATHERS BELIEVES RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS BASIC REASON FOR GOP'S HARDENING STANCE.

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3. MATHERS CONFIDED UB'S RESIDENT REP BOBBY WALKER WORKING HARD BEHIND THE SCENES TO CONTACT GEN. TORRIJOS IN EFFORT TO POSTPONE NEGOTIATIONS. IN THE MEANTIME UB WILL TRY TO CAPITALIZE ON GOP'S GROWING INTEREST IN THE FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES VENTURE, PROPOSED RECENTLY BY PATSA, UB'S SUBSIDIARY (REF B). ALTHOUGH GOP VICE PRESIDENT "TECHNICALLY" IN CHARGE OF NEGOTIATIONS, HE HAS BEEN ABSENT THIS WEEK LEAVING MINISTER COMMERCE INDUSTRIES MANFREDO TO RUN THE SHOW.

4. FYI: MR. KEVIN CORRIGAN, VICE PRESIDENT, COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS INTERNATIONAL, NEW YORK, CALLED ON DCM SEPTEMBER 24 AND CONFIRMED PLANNED VISIT TO PANAMA IN OCTOBER BY UB'S NEW PRESIDENT, WALLACE BOOTH (REF MEMO TO ASST. SEC. ROGERS FROM MINISTER MOREY BELL, AUGUST 27, 1974). OUR ASSESSMENT IS EXACT DATE, HOWEVER, WILL HINGE LARGELY ON OUTCOME GOP/UB NEGOTIATIONS.
GONZALEZ UNQTE INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, AGREEMENTS, BANANAS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE231029
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EB:NPZDRAL:BAS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750336-0468
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975099/aaaaahvg.tel
Line Count: 78
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 PANAMA 5698, 75 PANAMA 5536, 75 PANAMA 7397
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <05 NOV 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BANANAS: UNITED BRANDS/GOP NEGOTIATIONS
TAGS: ETRD, EIND, PN, US, UNITED BRANDS
To: LONDON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006